



Healthy Homes
Healthy Children

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Lead Update

Department of Health Releases the 2004 Data Book

The Department of Health is pleased to announce the release of the 2004 Data Book, "Childhood Lead Poisoning in Rhode Island: The Numbers." With the help of many community partners, DOH is able to highlight a number of achievements toward the goal of eliminating childhood lead poisoning in Rhode Island by the year 2010:

- ◆ The incidence of childhood lead poisoning in Rhode Island decreased from 4.8% in 2002 to 3.7% in 2003.
- ◆ Incidence rates in the core cities (Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick, and Woonsocket) also dropped, falling from 7.4% in 2002 to 5.6% in 2003
- ◆ Seventy percent (70%) of children born in 2001 were screened by 18 months of ages compared to 61.1% of children born in 1997.

Despite these achievements, children in Rhode Island are still suffering from lead poisoning at higher rates than children in other areas of the United States, and some families in Rhode Island do not utilize or gain access to services available to them.

- ◆ In 2003, 77% of families offered case management services accepted and received these services. Twenty-three percent (23%) did not receive services because they either refused or could not be located.
- ◆ In 2003, 184 environmental lead inspections were offered to families in Rhode Island. One hundred fifteen (115) inspections were performed, 25 inspections were refused, and 29 families did not respond to the offer.

These data reveal the need for continued commitment to and expansion of screening and case management, as well as the need for innovative prevention efforts. Creativity and dedication will be crucial to reaching our goal of eliminating childhood lead poisoning by 2010.

To receive a copy of the 2004 Data Book, please contact Ruth Lindberg at (401) 222-7681 or RuthL@doh.state.ri.us.

Attention Providers: DOH Alters Blood Lead Screening Guidelines!
Providers to Confirm CAPILLARY tests \geq 10 mcg/dL as of July 1, 2004

On July 1, 2004, the Rhode Island Department of Health will be releasing a revised version of the Pediatric Blood Lead Screening and Referral Guidelines. Currently, the Department of Health conducts follow-up (via a letter, telephone call, or both) to providers to ensure that a confirmatory venous test is done for children under the age of six who have a capillary test result greater than or equal to 20 mcg/dL. Starting July 1st, 2004, the blood lead level requiring a follow-up venous test will be reduced from 20 mcg/dL to 10 mcg/dL.

The guidelines for referrals to case management are also being revised. Currently, children under the age of six with a first time blood lead level, capillary or venous, between 15 and 19 mcg/dL are referred to case management. As of July 1, 2004, children with a first time blood lead level between 15 and 19 mcg/dL will be referred to case management only if the test result is based on a *venous* sample.

The revisions to the screening guidelines arose from an awareness of providers and case managers that many families in Rhode Island already desire and request venous confirmation before accepting services from the Lead Centers. Additionally, pediatricians throughout the state are already confirming elevated capillary tests with venous tests. In 2003, 68% (380 out of 556) of capillary tests between 10 and 19 mcg/dL were followed up with a venous test. As of July 1st, when the new guidelines are in effect, the Department of Health will continue to actively encourage pediatricians to confirm capillary tests greater than or equal to 20 mcg/dL, and will begin to provide support to confirm capillary tests between 10 and 19 mcg/dL. We expect that the changes in the guidelines and the additional support from the Department of Health will result in an even higher rate of confirmatory venous testing.

The revised *Lead Screening and Referral Guidelines* are currently being printed and will be distributed to health care providers in late July. They can also be found on HEALTH's website at http://www.health.ri.gov/lead/family/lead_poster.pdf.

If you have questions regarding these changes, please contact Pat Raymond, RN at (401) 222-5921 or PatR@doh.state.ri.us.

O'Neill Medical and Broadway OB-GYN win Lead Month Raffle!

As part of Lead Poisoning Prevention Month in Rhode Island, the Department of Health conducted site visits to all prenatal care providers in the state. Providers were asked to complete a survey regarding prenatal lead poisoning prevention practices in their clinic, and all providers who returned the survey were entered into a raffle. Congratulations to the raffle winners, O'Neill Medical and Broadway OB-GYN! These practices received a \$20 gift certificate to Staples. Thank you to all providers who participated in this survey! If you have a survey and have not yet returned it, please fax it to Ruth Lindberg at (401) 222-5734.